WORLD & NATION

Cardinal Hume dies following battle with cancer

By Paulinus Barnes
Catholic News Service

MANCHESTER, England — Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster, England, died June 17 in a London hospital where he was in the final stages of inoperable abdominal cancer.

Pope John Paul II, in a telegram of condolence, said, "I thank the Lord for having given the church a shepherd of great spiritual and moral character, of sensitive and unflinching ecumenical commitment and firm leadership in helping people of all beliefs to face the challenges of the last part of this difficult century."

In the June 18 telegram, the pope also expressed his hope that Cardinal Hume's "witness of dignity and hope in the face of the mystery of suffering and death will inspire all who knew him to ever greater fidelity to the Gospel of salvation."

Praying at the cardinal's bedside at the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth were Father Liam Kelly, assistant general secretary of the bishops' conference, Father James Curry, the cardinal's secretary, and William Charles, one of the cardinal's nephews.

In a joint statement, the auxiliary bishops of Westminster said, "For 23 years he has been a rock of strength for this diocese. We shall miss his calm and reassuring presence. We shall miss his inspiring leadership.

"We know that his eyes were always fixed first on God. The steadiness of this gaze filled him with the compassion and forgiveness that God has for us all. He lived as a man of God and has now gone home. May God welcome and reward him," the statement said.

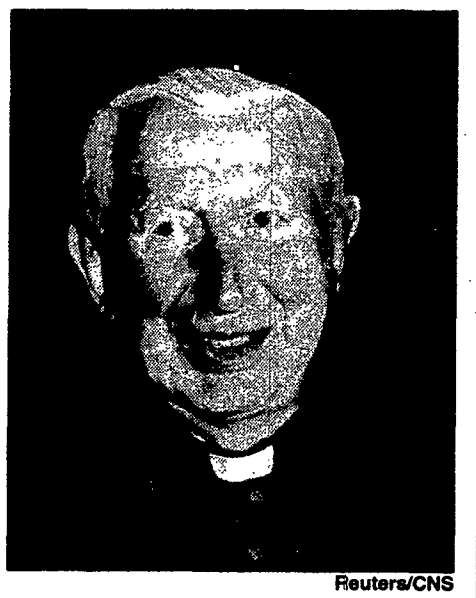
His funeral will take place the morning of June 25 in Westminster Cathedral, London. His body will be taken into the cathedral on the evening of June 24, following a period of three days of lying in the adjacent Westminster Cathedral Hall for public viewing. An indication of the esteem with which Cardinal Hume was held in British public life came in May, when Britain's Queen Elizabeth conferred upon him the rare honor of the Order of Merit – an honor reserved for 26 of the country's most distinguished people. It had never been given to a Catholic Church leader.

Cardinal Hume always said that the happiest days of his life were when he was a monk and schoolmaster at Ampleforth Abbey in Yorkshire, northern England.

A man who will be remembered for his compassion, Cardinal Hume came to the Archdiocese of Westminster from a background of wealth and privilege — yet emerged as a champion of people on the margins: the poor, the homeless, refugees and victims of miscarriages of justice. In recent months, he devoted much energy and thought to the international campaign to write off debts of the world's least developed countries.

Cardinal Hume — or simply "Father Basil" as many in the archdiocese came to call him — was occasionally described as a "hard-line" supporter of the Catholic Church's teaching on issues such as abortion and contraception, on homosexuality, on compulsory celibacy for Latin-rite priests or on intercommunion. Yet he combined a profound respect for the traditions and unity of the church with a deeply pastoral understanding of the people he had been called to lead.

His appointment to the Archdiocese of Westminster in 1976 was for most observers a surprise. He had been the abbot of Ampleforth for almost 13 years, leading a community of 150 monks and serving a private school where some of Britain's richest and most aristocratic Catholic families educated their sons.



Reuters/CNS

For centuries the Catholic Church had been on the periphery of public life in England and Wales. The established church was the Church of England; the monarch was forbidden by law to be or to marry a Catholic.

Yet Cardinal Hume, in a sense, became part of the British establishment – probably the most widely recognized church leader of his age. It was to Cardinal Hume, for instance, that the British Broadcasting Corporation turned for comment in the early hours of the morning of Aug. 31, 1997, when it was confirmed that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been killed in a car crash.

Described by Cardinal Carlo Martini of Milan, Italy, as "one of the great prophetic figures of our age," George Hume was born into an affluent family in Newcastle-upon-Tyne March 2, 1923. His father, William Errington Hume, was a professor of medicine and a heart specialist; his mother, Lady Marie Elizabeth Hume, was French.

At the age of 13 he went to Ampleforth College, North Yorkshire, a private Catholic school, and after leaving school, joined the monastery in 1941. He was professed as a Benedictine monk in September 1942 took his solemn vows in 1945, and was ordained a priest in 1951.

Among the highlights of Cardinal Hume's 23 years as archbishop of Westminster, the 1982 visit of Pope John Paul II to Britain will probably be remembered most by Catholics. The visit was put in jeopardy in the final weeks of preparations when Britain and Argentina went to war over the Falkland Islands. Commentators at the time attributed the fact that the visit went ahead to the quiet and diplomatic persistence of Cardinal Hume, who welcomed to Westminster Cathedral the first pope to set foot on English soil.

In the late 1970s and in the 1980s, Cardinal Hume played a crucial role in the campaign to free the so-called "Guildford Four" and the "Maguire Seven" who had been wrongfully convicted of terrorism offenses.

He also will be remembered for his concern for the homeless. He was president of the national, nondenominational charity Shelter, and he was instrumental in persuading the Daughters of Charity to set up a day center for homeless people in the shadow of Westminster Cathedral.

In the 1990s, he was at the forefront of the campaign to ease the debt burden on the world's poorest countries. In 1996 he hosted a seminar at Archbishop's House in Westminster, bringing together leading politicians, church leaders from the developing world, and officials from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

In April, he announced he was suffering from inoperable cancer.

CALENDAR

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Health

■ **THU, JUNE 24 – Health screenings:** Horseheads Internal Medicine, 2977 Westinghouse Rd., Horseheads; 3-7 p.m.; free; no reservations needed.

Social Activities

■ **THU, JUNE 24 – Spaghetti supper:** St. Anthony's Parish Hall, 209 Front St., Elmira; 5-7 p.m.; free.

Monroe County

Fundraisers

■ **JUNE 25–27 – Bike tour:** through Finger Lakes Wine Country; 45 miles per day or 1 day 30-mile ride June 27; food, entertainment, lodging; to benefit the American Lung Association; 716/442-4260.

■ **WED, JUNE 30 – Golf tournament:** to benefit Prevention Partners for a drug-free community; men: Shadow Lake Golf Club, 1850 Five Mile Line Rd., Penfield; women: Shadow Pines Golf Club, 600 Whalen Rd., Penfield; registration 10 a.m.; $95; 716/288-2800, ext. 25.

Meetings

■ **THU, JUNE 24 – Meeting:** Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Monroe County Board; Catholic Women's Club, 492 East Ave., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.

■ **THU, JUNE 24 – Support group:** for birth parents, adoptees, adoptive parents; Don and Bob's, 2075 Monroe Ave., Brighton; 7 p.m.; call Judith 716/359-2544.

■ **SUN, JUNE 27 – 20th Anniversary:** service of remembrance; to honor children of Camp Good Days and Special Times; Highland Bowl, Highland Park; 10 a.m.; free; open to public.

■ **MON, JUNE 28 – Entrance exam:** Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester; 8:30 a.m.; call 716/288-7120.

Religious Activities

■ **FRI, JUNE 25 – Registration deadline:** for July 12-16 Vacation Bible School; "Solid Rock Dude Ranch"; for ages 6-12; New Jerusalem Church, 890 N. Goodman St., Rochester; 9 a.m.-noon; free; 716/288-0030.

■ **SUN, JUNE 27– Mass:** and reception; to mark Sister Lucille Nabone, MPF's, 50th jubilee; 11:15 a.m.; St. Andrew's Church, 923 Portland Ave., Rochester.

■ **SUN, JUNE 27 – Field Mass:** sponsored by the Knights of St. John and Ladies Auxiliary; All Saints Mausoleum, Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, 2461 Lake Ave., Rochester; 10 a.m.; Bishop Dennis Hickey, celebrant.

■ **JUNE 28–July 2 – Vacation Bible School:** Family of God; Holy Name of Jesus Parish Center, 15 St. Martin's Way, Rochester; 9:30 a.m.-noon; $10 per child/$20 per family; call Ellen 716/663-1531.

■ **THU, JULY 1 – Registration deadline:** for July 8 retreat "A Day To Call Your Own!"; Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; $10; 716/473-6893.

■ **THU, JULY 1 – Centering prayer group:** Guardian Angels Church, 2061 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester; 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Social Activities

■ **SUN, JUNE 27 – Gathering:** farewell; "Vaya Con Dios" to Fr. Roy Kiggins; Morgan-Manning House, 151 Main St., Brockport; 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

■ **SUN, JUNE 27 – Art show/sale:** Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse, behind Holy Cross Church, 4490 Lake Ave., Rochester; 1-5 p.m.; 716/544-1720.

■ **JUNE 28–JULY 2 – Basketball camp:** Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester; session 1: girls 10-12, 8-11 a.m.; session 2: girls 13-15, noon-3 p.m.; $110; Kathleen Boughton, director; to register call 716/288-7120.

■ **WED, JUNE 30 – Picnic:** sponsored by Surviving Spouses support group; Brighton Town Park, Westfall Rd.; 5:30 p.m.; $7; to register call Genesee Region Home Care's Hospice Bereavement Services 716/262-1930.

■ **THU, JULY 1 – Registration deadline:** for July 19-22 cheerleading camp; Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Hwy. S., Irondequoit; grades 4-12; 6-8:30 p.m.; $50; to register call 716/234-2992.

■ **OCT. 5 – 70th Anniversary kickoff:** St. Francis of Assisi Church, 77 Whitney St., Rochester; seeking current and former parishioners; to be placed on mailing list call 716/436-6693.

Seneca Cayuga

Fundraisers

■ **JUNE 24, 25 – Garage sale:** sponsored by the Rosary Altar Society; St. Joseph's Parish Center, E. Genesee St., Auburn; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Steuben County

Religious Activities

■ **SUN, JUNE 27 – Cablecast Mass:** from St. Patrick's Church, Corning; Time Warner Cable Channel One; 10:30 a.m.; videotaped Sat., 4:30 p.m.

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Meetings

■ **SAT, JUNE 26 – Support group:** Divorced, separated, bereaved; Log Cabin Restaurant, Route 31F, Macedon Center; 9 a.m.; call Eleanor 315/597-9558.

Religious Activities

■ **FRI, JULY 2 – Nocturnal Adoration:** St. Mary's Church chapel, 95 N. Main St., Canandaigua; 7-8 p.m.

Social Activities

■ **SUN, JUNE 27 – Golf:** sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes divorced, separated, bereaved support groups; Big Oak Golf Course, Packwood Rd., Geneva; 4 p.m. every Sunday; call Les 315/789-9419, Carl and Alma 315/539-2284 or Claire 716/394-6722.

■ **THRU JULY 4 – Musical:** "The Fantasticks"; Bristol Valley Theater, 151 S. Main St., Naples; Thurs., Fri., Sat. 8 p.m.; Sun. 2 p.m.; call 716/374-6318.